



# Child Support Recovery Unit

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## Purpose

The purpose of the Child Support Recovery Unit is to assist custodial parents in receiving court-ordered child support payments and to assist in determining paternity in non-marital births. Recoveries also assist taxpayers by helping to reimburse government costs for custodial parents who receive public assistance.

## Who

In SFY 2010, CSRU served 678,508 parents and children on 192,758 cases. Of these:

- 11 percent receive welfare through Iowa's Family Investment Program (FIP).
- 34 percent formerly received FIP.
- 55 percent never received FIP and asked for the state's help in collecting child support and paid a one-time \$25 fee.

Caseloads are expected to level off because – beginning August 2010 – parents receiving Medicaid will have the option, rather than a mandate, to accept services from CSRU.

## What

- In SFY 2010, about 71 percent of collections came from income withholding. The CSRU established a one-stop call center for employers called the Employers Partnering in Child Support (EPICS). A secure website allows employers to electronically transfer funds making it easier to comply with income withholding orders they receive.
- Another highly effective and cost-efficient enforcement method is to capture state and federal tax refunds before they go to parents who owe child support.
- Other collection methods include license sanction, intercept of insurance payments, property liens, contempt of court, passport sanction, and credit bureau reporting.
- CSRU service is based on the "Connections Equals Collections" approach in which non-custodial parents are encouraged to play an important role in the lives of their children through actively participating in establishment and modification of orders.

## How are We Doing?

- CSRU received the award for Exemplary Employer Website from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement for a secure web site that enables employers to electronically send withheld wages and to report hires/discharges. More than 15,000 employers have used the system to send \$69 million in withheld wages since the program began in 2005.
- In federal fiscal year 2008 (audited data), Iowa had the 13<sup>th</sup> highest percent of cases with a court order – 85 percent. Paternity and child support court orders are the legal basis needed before child support can be collected.
- The CSRU is among the highest-ranked states in on-time collections from non-custodial parents, 71 percent.
- Iowa collected \$336.7 million in child support in SFY10, which is nearly double the level just 13 years ago but down slightly from SFY09 because of the economy. Most came from withholding but an increasing percentage came from unemployment benefits.
- The cost-effectiveness ratio is \$5.61 collected in child support for every \$1.00 spent.
- Iowa CSRU is the recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Program of the Year award from the National Child Support Enforcement Association.
- Iowa CSRU is the recipient of the 2009 Commissioner's Award for Innovative Technology from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) for Iowa's document imaging technology development and implementation.